In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

To the Curious Mind Seeking Knowledge,

Asslamo alikum wa Rahmatullah,

You asked me why your heart finds no delight in *Salat*, and though I answered in words, I felt compelled to pen this letter, so you might have the opportunity to reflect deeply on this important matter as reflection is best savored when done by the stillness of a solitary heart.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) says:
"Allah the Exalted has created man so that he may worship Him. Why then would there be no pleasure and delight in this worship? There is definitely pleasure and delight in worship, if only there were those who would take it." (Malfuzat Vol. 1.p. 156)

Let me ask you: What is prayer *Salat* to you?
What is the purpose of prayer?
Is it merely an obligation, a duty that weighs upon your shoulders, done out of habit or fear of neglect?
Is it an exercise to ask God for things?
Is it a means to some other goal?
Is it something more – a key, a bridge, a vessel?

Prayer in itself is not the ultimate goal or purpose. It is a means and a tool to help us remember and love our Lord—our Creator. If you do not find pleasure in prayer, it suggests that you do not find pleasure in communion with your Lord. This lack of pleasure points to an underlying issue: your love for God may be lukewarm, and your heart may not yet be attuned to the symphony of Divine love. Prayer is the rope by which the heart ascends, trembling, yearning, to its Beloved.

When you love someone, you enjoy their company and want to spend time with them. Prayer is akin to spending time with God. If *Salat* feels barren, then surely it is not the act that lacks, but the love within the heart that stirs it.

The next natural question is: Why do some people love Allah more than others? Those who love Allah deeply possess a profound understanding of Him (*Ma'arifat*) that others may lack.

Worldly attractions are easy to love because we can see, touch, and experience them directly. Allah, however, cannot be experienced through the five senses. Loving Him requires time and effort, starting with intellect and imagination. To love Him, you must begin with your mind, filling it with His *Ma'arifat* and remembrance, and let that knowledge trickle down into your heart. They who love Allah know Him; they have gazed upon His beauty and been captivated by it. Focus on two aspects:

1. Allah's beauty
2. Allah's boundless generosity and favours upon yourself and his creation

You might wonder, "What is Allah's beauty?" Allah's beauty lies in His attributes: His uniqueness in existence, His might in control, His power in creation, His kingship in ruling, His mercy in granting life and sustenance and much more. To love Allah, you must train your heart to recognize His beauty wherever it lies. This recognition will create a natural desire within you to do *Hamd* (praise), *Dhikr* (remembrance), and engage in acts of worship, as you become more aware of His countless blessings and attributes.

Maulana Jalaudin Rumi (r.h) says:
There's no cure, except the retreat into love.
See the Friend directly, or burn in longing for Him -
What does the whole world matter, apart from that?

To increase your love for Allah, consider these practices:

1. Read all the verses of the Holy Qur'an that describe Allah's essence, attributes, and actions.
2. Study the 99+ Names of Allah in detail. (I have compiled a booklet which delves deep in meanings and reflections of each name. Let me know if you need a copy.)
3. Pick one Name of Allah each day, sit alone for 30 minutes, and reflect deeply on its meaning while repeating it.
4. Allah says: *"For Allah are beautiful names, so call upon Him by them"* (7:181).
   To increase your love for Allah, frequently repeat these Names:

   يَا وَدُودُ - ***Ya-Wadud – O Most Loving***

   يَا رَحْمٰنُ - ***Ya-Rahman – O Most Merciful***

   يَا وَهَّابُ - ***Ya-Wahhab – O Bestower***

   Allah can bestow material, spiritual and emotional blessings on His servants.

5. Every day, spend some time counting the favors of Allah upon you in detail, such as the gift of health, the ability to see and hear, the food you eat, the shelter you live in, and the loved ones in your life, etc.

   وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

   "*And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Surah An-Nahl 16:19)*

You should not limit your *Salat* to *Fard* and *Sunnah* but also offer additional *Nawafil*, especially during *Tahajjud* or even before and after the five daily prayers. Deep and profound love grows through *Nawafil*.

Hazrat Aisha (r.a.) said of the Holy Prophet's lengthy and beautiful *Nawafil*: *"Do not ask about their length and beauty."* A companion of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) mentioned that the Promised Messiah (a.s.) would offer such long *Nawafil* that the companion would get tired.

Allah says: *"And that man will have nothing but what he strives for"* (53:40). Thus, these efforts may require perseverance. But without effort, nothing can be achieved.

Remember, the path to love is a striving:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۚ

"And as for those who strive in Our path—We will surely guide them in Our ways" (29:70)
Right effort kindles love as surely as wood kindles flame.

Rest assured, love for Allah grows, and His beauty and grace will begin to ignite your heart as fire ignites dry wood. You must fan the embers of love in your heart by recognizing Allah's beauty in everything around you. A beautiful garden, a melodious song, a radiant face, or a starry night sky—all reflect Allah's beauty. These worldly beauties are but mirrors of His Divine beauty.

Directly experiencing Allah's beauty differs from perceiving it indirectly. It is like looking at the sun in a mirror versus gazing at it directly. In this world, we mostly perceive Allah through the mirror of His creation.

Let the steed of love carry you to Him, for it knows the way and is the surest path to God.

Pray this supplication often as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ، وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ، وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ

"O Allah, I ask You for Your love, the love of those who love You, and the love of every action that will bring me closer to Your love…" (Tirmidhi)

To My Beloved Lord – A Poem

In the stillness of night, I call Your Name,
Ya-Wadud, Ya-Rahman, a tender flame.
Why does my heart not dance in prayer?
Why does my soul feel barren, bare?

Is it my love that falters so?
A timid seed that's yet to grow?
Oh, Allah, teach my heart to see,
The beauty that reflects only Thee.

Your mercy flows, a boundless sea,
Your kindness wraps the world and me.
But I, a wanderer, blind and frail,
Struggle to follow the sacred trail.

What is Salat but a path to You,
A thread of light through skies of blue?
Yet I kneel and feel no fire's spark,
No glowing ember to pierce the dark.

They say, "Love blooms through knowing well,"
Of You, the stories the heavens tell.
Your names, like stars, each a flame,
A mirror to Your eternal name.

Al-Wahhab, You give, though none can repay,
Your favors pour down, day upon day.
The heavens declare Your glorious art,
And all creation echoes Your heart.

Teach me, O Lord, to love as I should,
To seek Your grace in the bad and the good.
To see Your beauty in every face,
In every shadow, in every space.

Let my Salat be a lover's plea,
A whispered song that flows to Thee.
Not duty's chain, but a soaring dove,
A cry of longing, a hymn of love.

O Allah, make Your love my all,
Stronger than life, sweeter than fall.
A fire to burn through all I've known,
Until my heart is Yours alone.

Let every dawn bring me near,
Let every night dissolve my fear.
For in Your love, my soul takes flight,
My darkest shadows turned to light.

Al-Wadud, Al-Rahman, Al-Wahhab, Divine,
Let this small heart forever be Thine.

May our journey towards deeper love and connection with Allah continue to guide us through every step, every prayer, and every moment of life. May Allah guide you with His love and mercy, and fill your heart with His light.

Yours sincerely,
Balal F. Khokhar